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Al Doura Refinery looking for alternative energy sources

By Erich Langer
 Gulf Region Division



Dathar Taheen, directorate general and general manager of Gol's Midland Refinery Company discusses with Gary Vogler, Gulf Region Division energy sector engineer, using solar and wind generated energy to provide electrical power for refineries across central Iraq. GRD works closely with Taheen and the Ministry of Oil to upgrade the nation's antiquated oil infrastructure. (USACE Photo)

BAGHDAD, Iraq – In the Doura district of Baghdad, security is improved near one of Iraq's older oil refineries. Al Doura refinery, a rusting relic of Saddam's pervasive neglect of oil infrastructure, wouldn't seem to be the likely bastion of wind and solar energy for Iraqi leadership. .

Dathar Al Hasan Taheen, directorate general and general manager of Midland Refinery Company for the Ministry of Oil, has many responsibilities at al Doura. Most of his hours are spent trying to keep

the refineries under his charge producing diesel and gasoline to feed the nation's growing thirst for petroleum products. His other principle challenge is getting enough crude oil from the Basra oilfields of southern Iraq. For his refinery operations to operate efficiently, he must have abundant supplies of raw crude to generate refined products.

The directorate general deals with all too common pipeline flow disruptions - spurring from maintenance neglect, insur-



Dathar Taheen, Minister of Oil directorate general for the Midland Refinery Company points out Phase II of new Government of Iraq funded construction at Doura refinery to Gary Vogler, GRD energy sector engineer. The Gulf Region Division works with Taheen and GoI leadership to improve the petroleum infrastructure that helps increase crude oil, natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas production in Iraq; the U.S. government's commitment of \$1.7 billion helped 'jump start' GoI's oil infrastructure reconstruction program. (USACE Photo)

gent attacks and common thievery. He also manages daily logistical issues associated with trucking gasoline to Baghdad area petrol stations.

"Going green isn't just a trend in the U.S. and other western nations," said Taheen. "I am an oilman so I should be interested in all types of energy. We think we are a little big behind in researching and developing alternative energy sources; we are an oil producing country but this is no reason not to look toward the future."

Of particular interest is tapping into wind and solar energy sources. With the assistance and mentorship of engineers from the Gulf Region Division, Taheen thinks he has a plan that can be implemented.

"The people of Iraq need more power and what Dathar Taheen is proposing is going to supply more power," said Gary Vogler, GRD energy sector engineer who worked with Taheen since 2003. "If the electricity is directed to the refinery there

will be more power on the grid for the rest of the population. Also, in the rural areas that have little or no connectivity to the grid, the solar panels and wind farms he wants to bring to Iraq could help satisfy these isolated pockets' quest for power."

With Vogler's assistance and guidance from officials with Multi National Force – Iraq's Energy Fusion Cell, Taheen is assembling a team of resource professionals that can assist him move from the drawing board to implementation. Vogler has helped improve Iraq oil infrastructure since he arrived over four years ago.

"Thanks to American taxpayers, the United States has been hard at work assisting GoI (Government of Iraq) improve the infrastructure to increase crude oil, natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas production capacity in Iraq," said Vogler. "With the U.S. contribution of \$1.7 billion, we have seen substantial capacity in these areas. Of course, our effort to 'jump start' Iraq's oil infrastructure rehabilitation helped them get over the hump. Today,



The Gulf Region Division's Energy Sector Engineer, Gary Vogler, discuss the expansion of Al Doura Refinery production capacity with Dathar Taheen, directorate general for Gol's Midland Refinery Company. The facility is undergoing a two-phase expansion that will greatly increase the refinery's capacity to produce diesel and gasoline products for Iraqis. (USACE Photo)

Gol is spending Iraqi money on projects."

"I have business in the U.K and U.S and I will be sharing Dathar's ideas with many experts from the private sector and academia," said Vogler. "It is all about assembling the right team to start connecting the dots."

With Taheen and Vogler teaming up, Iraq's quest to develop a road map for alternative energy should be on a strong foundation.

"We are trying to find possibilities to supply certain facilities, oil refineries in Samawah and Najaf and maybe others, to provide power for those refineries using wind turbines," said Taheen. "We'll need to get wind survey data. Some of the initial work can be done with satellite technology while fine tuning the specific areas for wind farms will come from scientists gathering data at sites in Iraq."

The benefits of using wind or solar to run refinery operations will not only impact the oil facilities.

"The sun and the wind is a gift from God. If you have it, why not use it? Rural people can use alternative energy as a heat and light source and you can use photoelectric cells to add electricity di-

rectly to the grid," said Taheen.

In October, the Ministry of Oil will host an international oil conference and symposium at Baghdad International Airport's new Business and Convention Center. The conference will bring oilmen and energy experts from around the world together in Iraq for the first conference of its kind in post-Saddam Iraq.



Established in 1955, the al Doura Refinery, located in south central Baghdad, has the capacity to produce 90,000 barrels per day of diesel and gasoline product. Minister of Oil Directorate General, Dathar Taheen, is spearheading a Government of Iraq funded refinery construction program that will increase the Doura Refinery's production capacity by an additional 140,000 barrels per day. (USACE Photo)

Note: Erich Langer is a public affairs specialist with the Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact Erich at (540) 542-1443 or e-mail requests to CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil. For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit www.grd.usace.army.mil